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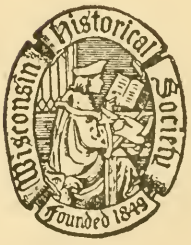
MARSHALL MASON STRONG, RACINE PIONEER

BY

EUGENE WALTER LEACH



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EUGENE WALTER LEACH

In presenting this sketch of Marshall M. Strong, it seems proper to state, by way of prelude, that I was but a lad when Mr. Strong died, in 1864, and do not remember ever to have seen him. I have talked, however, with many discerning people who knew him well, all of whom have spoken of him in terms of unqualified praise and almost reverential respect and regard. In city and county and court records I have encountered his name and his work repeatedly. In every authentic history of Racine County and of the state of Wisconsin he is given a definite place in the beginnings of things. What I have learned of Mr. Strong has awakened in me an ardent admiration for him, and a conviction that the people of this generation in his home city and state should know something of the life and work of one of the real founders of this commonwealth of ours—a man who was fitted for the task, and who left the impress of his genius and high character on its political, educational, professional, and civic institutions, and an example of probity in his public and private life well worthy of emulation.

Marshall Mason Strong was a prominent figure in that notable group of sterling men and women who migrated from New England and New York to southeastern Wisconsin in the decade beginning with 1834. They were people with a background of inheritance and training that fitted them for pioneer work—for foundation laying—and they gave the communities where they settled a tone and character that have survived the lapse of three-fourths of a century of time, and the influence of that other flood of alien peoples that has poured into the same section in the last sixty years.

Mr. Strong was exceptionally well equipped for the task that confronted those pioneers. The founder of the Strong family in this country—Elder John Strong—came from England to Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1630, and with one exception the succeeding five generations, leading in line to the subject of this sketch, continued to live in that state, the exception being the father of our subject, Hezekiah Wright Strong, a lawyer of marked distinction, who moved to Troy, New York, in 1832, where he died October 7, 1848, aged seventy-nine. His paternal grandfather, Simeon Strong, a graduate of Yale College, attained eminence both as a preacher and as a lawyer; he was a justice of the supreme court of Massachusetts from 1800 until his death on December 14, 1805, aged sixty-nine.

It will be worth while to note here that Elder John Strong was the paternal ancestor also of Moses M. Strong, another pioneer lawyer of Wisconsin who achieved eminence. Being a contemporary with a similar name, he has sometimes been confused with Marshall M. Strong, though he was not a near relative. He came to Wisconsin in 1836 from Vermont, representing capitalists interested in the lead mines, and settled at Mineral Point, where he continued to reside, except for a brief interval when he lived in Milwaukee, until his death July 20, 1894.

Mr. Strong was born at Amherst, Massachusetts, September 3, 1813. I have made considerable effort to learn something of his childhood and youth, but with little success. It is now more than ninety-five years since he celebrated his thirteenth birthday, and there are none living now who knew him then; while no written account of his early life has been found, further than the bare record of his years in college. His collegiate education was begun at Amherst, where he spent two years, from 1830 to 1832. In September of the latter year he entered Union College, Schenectady, New York, his father having removed from

Amherst to Troy, New York during that year. He did not graduate from Union, however, and there is no record of the time he left there. He subsequently engaged in the study of law at Troy, where he was admitted to the bar. He must have come West very soon thereafter, for on June 2, 1836, before he was twenty-three years old, he arrived at Racine—then called Root River—by the Great Lakes route, on the steamboat *Pennsylvania*. From this day forth to the day of his death he was closely and continuously identified with the interests of the community and commonwealth which he had chosen as the field of his life work.

Although Gilbert Knapp, the founder of Racine, staked out his claim comprising the original plat of the city in November, 1834, settlement did not begin thereon until the spring of 1835. During this year half a dozen frame buildings and a few log houses were erected. The arrivals during the spring of 1836 did not add greatly to the population of the village, and it was therefore an undeveloped, pioneer settlement to which young Strong came, and to whose fortunes he joined his own on that June day in the second year of Racine's history. There was nothing that invited to ease or pleasure in the immediate prospect, and only the man with vision and a will to work—only the true pioneer—could be attracted by what it held in prospect.

Mr. Strong was the first lawyer who settled in Racine County, and there were few in the state who preceded him. Soon after his arrival he formed a partnership with Stephen N. Ives, and a general store was opened under the name of Strong and Ives, from which it may be inferred that there was little or no demand for the services of a lawyer at that stage of the settlement's growth. Charles E. Dyer, in his historical address, states that Judge Frazer, territorial justice, was the first judge who presided in April, 1837 over a court of record in Racine County, and that only eight days were occupied by the court in the three terms held there in the first eighteen months of its existence.

In the absence of positive record it seems probable that Mr. Strong continued as senior partner of the village store until the increasing demands of his profession required all of his time. This change must have come about comparatively early, for the troubled years from 1837 to 1839 brought many disputes between the settlers over the boundaries of their respective claims. It is a matter of record that Strong's legal ability was often invoked in the composition of these disputes. In June, 1837 a wide-reaching organization of the settlers of southeastern Wisconsin was formed, the object of which was the mutual protection of the settlers in their claims, and in fixing the boundary lines between them. All were trespassers in the eyes of the law, and it required wise counsel, as well as firm purpose and concerted action, to enforce fair dealing by those who were otherwise disposed. Gilbert Knapp was the president of this organization, and Marshall M. Strong was a member of the committee which drafted its constitution. It included a judicial committee, or court, before which all cases were heard and all disputes definitely and finally settled. It was government by the people without the sanction of written law, but with the force of a practically unanimous public opinion, and as a temporary expedient it worked well.

Mr. Strong married Amanda Hawks of Troy, New York, on May 27, 1840, and brought her to his home in Wisconsin, where he was rapidly making a place and name for himself. Three children were born to them, one of whom—Robert—died in infancy. Before six years of their married life had passed, a devastating shadow fell across the path of Mr. Strong. On January 27, 1846, while he was at Madison attending a session of the territorial council, of which he was a member, his home in Racine was destroyed by fire and his entire family, consisting of wife and two children, perished in the flames. The children were Henry, aged four years and ten months, and Juliet, aged nine months.

The appalling tragedy shocked the community and the Territory as perhaps no similar occurrence had ever done, and the profound sympathy of all citizens went out to the stricken husband and father.

The next day Albert G. Knight, a friend of Mr. Strong, undertook to convey to him at Madison the news of his bereavement and bring him home; there being no railroad he made the trip with his own horses and sleigh. On arrival at the capitol he found Mr. Strong addressing the Council. At the conclusion of his argument he was given the distressing news, when without a word he put aside his business, secured his wraps and effects, and accompanied Mr. Knight on the return trip, sitting with bowed head and speaking scarcely at all during the two full days that it consumed. Both houses of the legislature passed appropriate resolutions and adjourned.[1]

During the last dozen years I have talked with a number of people, all now dead, who lived in Racine in 1846 and were witnesses of the fire and its tragic ending. One of these was Mrs. Margaret Lewis, mother of ex-Alderman John H. Lewis, who died very recently. In 1846 she was a maid in the home of lawyer Edward G. Ryan, later chief justice of the supreme court of Wisconsin, who lived in the house at the northeast corner of Seventh and Chippewa streets, which is still standing and in fairly good condition. Marshall M. Strong was his next-door neighbor on the north, the buildings being not more than thirty feet apart. Mrs. Lewis, who at the time was sixteen years of age, witnessed all of the terrifying incidents connected with the burning of Mr. Strong's house and the death of his wife and children on that winter night, and they made a very deep impression

[1] The information contained in this paragraph was secured a few years ago from Mrs. Albert G. Knight, who is now dead. She stated that it was the supreme court where her husband found Mr. Strong engaged, but reference to contemporary Madison papers shows that it was the Council, to which Mr. Strong belonged. Mrs. Knight told me that her husband had a great admiration for Mr. Strong, and spoke of him often in terms of affection and high praise.—Author.

on her mind, the recollection of them being vivid until the day of her death in 1913.

Bereft of his entire family at the age of thirty-three, Mr. Strong was deeply afflicted, and for a time bore the distressing burden silently and alone. The passing weeks, however, mitigated the poignancy of his sorrow, and he returned with something of his usual cheerfulness and vigor to his professional and political duties. The new and very important work connected with the deliberations of the first constitutional convention, of which he was a member, and into which, in the fall of 1846, he threw himself wholeheartedly, was no doubt a beneficent factor in the healing of his stricken life.

On September 19, 1850, he married Emilie M. Ullmann of Racine, daughter of Isaac J. Ullmann, a banker. There were born of this union two sons and one daughter. Ullmann Strong was born June 30, 1851; was educated at Yale, where he graduated in 1873; practised law in Chicago until 1900, when he retired, and now lives at Summit, New Jersey. Henry Strong was born September 22, 1853, and died October 23, 1912. He was engaged in the lumber business at Kansas City, Missouri. Fannie A. Strong was born April 17, 1860, and died February 24, 1911. Emilie Ullmann Strong, the wife and mother, survived her husband forty-seven years, and died April 19, 1911. Ullmann Strong is the only member of the family now living. His generous response to my request for information for the purposes of this sketch is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

Mr. Strong was a consistent and constant friend of education during all of his life. He was one of the incorporators of the Racine Seminary, with whose subsequent history I am not familiar. On April 5, 1842, he was elected, with Lyman K. Smith and Eldad Smith, father of Mrs. John G. Meachem, member of the first board of school commissioners of the town of Racine. This board, and its

successors until 1853, had entire charge of school management and the collection and disbursement of school funds, the sources of which were in the management and disposition of the school section lands. In 1893 Col. John G. McMynn, in a letter to H. G. Winslow, then city superintendent of schools, paid a high compliment to Marshall M. Strong, A. C. Barry, and others for their capable and wise management of the public schools of Racine previous to 1852.

Mr. Strong was one of the incorporators and a member of the first board of trustees of Racine College in 1852, and continued an enthusiastic supporter of the institution all of his life thereafter. He and Dr. Elias Smith were influential in securing from Charles S. Wright and Isaac Taylor the gift of the original ten acres of land on which the college buildings are located. In 1853 he was a member of the faculty as a lecturer on political science. In an historical sketch of Racine College by Horace Wheeler, A.M., an alumnus, a high tribute is paid to its Racine friends and patrons, a number of whom he listed, adding, "and Marshall M. Strong, Esq., who was not only a large contributor, but whose counsel and personal efforts down to the day of his death were of inestimable value."

Mr. Strong was not only the first lawyer in Racine, but he tried and won the first lawsuit in Racine County, which grew out of a competitive squirrel hunt in which he was leader of one side and Norman Clark of the other. It had been agreed that all kinds of game should be hunted; a squirrel to count a certain number of points, a muskrat another, a deer's head 300, and a live wolf 1000; trophies to be obtained by fair means or foul. Two of the party heard of a deer hunter at Pleasant Prairie who had a good collection of heads, and they stealthily set out for them and got them. Meanwhile Mr. Strong's party heard of a live wolf in Chicago. It was sent for, but while being brought to

Racine it was killed by a Captain Smith of a party of drunken sailors at Willis's tavern, west of Kenosha on the Chicago stage road, the weapon used being a bottle of gin. In the meantime Mr. Strong went to Milwaukee and got a sleigh-load of muskrat noses, which out-counted everything. The squirrel hunt was broken up; Mr. Clark had ruined Schuyler Mattison's horse and had to pay $75 damages. Mr. Strong brought suit against Captain Smith for killing the wolf, and the jury, before Justice-of-the-Peace Mars, brought in a verdict of "guilty," assessing damages at six cents, Norman Clark being on the jury.

Mr. Strong was the first city attorney for Racine, having been elected for the first city council in 1848. In 1856–57 he was city railroad commissioner, whose duty it was to look after the city's interests, and to vote its $300,000 stock in the stockholders' meetings of the Racine and Mississippi Railroad. In 1859 the city had a bonded indebtedness of $400,000—railroad, harbor, plank-road, school, and bridge bonds—a burdensome load, on which even the interest remained unpaid, and there was serious talk of repudiation. Mr. Strong opposed this, and warned the people that they were "riding on a stolen railway; using a stolen harbor; traveling over stolen roads and bridges; and sending their children to stolen schools." The city narrowly escaped bankruptcy, but did not repudiate its debts.

In the forties and fifties two-thirds of the people hereabouts were Democrats, and Mr. Strong was a Democrat in politics, though temperamentally an aristocrat. His political career may be said to have been limited to the decade between 1841 and 1851; at any rate he held no public office after the latter date. On the organization of the village of Racine in the spring of 1841, he was elected a member of the first board of trustees. It does not appear from the records of the meetings of that first board that the business before them was such as would tax very

severely the business or professional capacity of men of the quality of Mr. Strong, and it is surmised that he may have had some such feeling, for he never again appeared as a candidate for an elective village or city office. He was, however, chosen a member of the upper house—the territorial council—of the legislative assemblies of 1838–39 and 1843–47 inclusive, and as member of the lower house in 1849. Before the close of the session of 1838–39 he resigned, and Lorenzo Janes was appointed to serve his unexpired term.

Although Mr. Strong maintained a patriotic and lively interest in all political movements during his lifetime, he was indifferent to the appeal of public office, except as it meant opportunity and power to promote the public good; this sounds trite, but is true nevertheless. Strife for his own political preferment was extremely distasteful to him, for he was above the small hypocrisies sometimes practised —often with success—in personal political contests, and his experience had bred in him early a detestation of those methods of courting success, and of the men who practised them. In a Fourth of July address in 1846 he gave utterance to sentiments betokening more than a tinge of cynicism also in his political views, when he said: "Are not the electors all over the Union influenced more or less by personal or local considerations; by unfounded prejudice; by falsehood, asserted and reiterated with the pertinacity of truth; by political intrigue and management, until it has come to be regarded in the minds of many worthy men, almost a disgrace to be chosen to office? They seem to ask, in the language of the poet,

> How seldom, friend, a good great man inherits
> Honor or wealth with all his worth and pains!
> It seems like stories from the land of spirits,
> If any man obtain that which he merits,
> Or any merit that which he obtains.

"It is certainly unfortunate that our system of government should in any manner offer a bounty for fraud,

intrigue, and hypocrisy, and that that bounty should be some of its highest offices."

In the course of an address before the Lawyers' Club of Racine County on May 7, 1901, Charles E. Dyer[2] gave an estimate and appreciation of Mr. Strong, from which I think it worth while to quote the following paragraphs:

"As senior at the bar in age and residence, stood Marshall M. Strong. I wish you could have known him. He was an ideal lawyer, and none excelled him in the state of Wisconsin. He was tall, though somewhat stooping; slender, and as clear-cut as a model in marble. His head and face were as purely intellectual as any I ever saw. His great eyes shining out of his face looked you through, and told you that his mind was as clear and bright as a burnished scimitar. When he made manifest his intellectual power in argument or conversation, he made one think of the inscription on the old Spanish sword,—'never draw me without reason—never sheathe me without honor.'

"No matter what demonstration of opposing intellect he encountered, he was as cool and impassive as a statue. In the law and in every department of knowledge he was a philosopher. He was quiet, urbane, earnest, unimpassioned, and his logic was inexorable. I do not think I ever heard him laugh aloud, but his argument was so persuasive, and his smile and gesture so gentle and winning, that when once the listener yielded his premises, there was no escape from his conclusion.

"Discomfiture was unknown to him. He never exhibited depression in defeat nor exultation in success—a true rule of conduct for every lawyer. Once I saw him in a great case, when Matthew H. Carpenter swept the courtroom with a tornado of eloquence. He sat unaffected, self-controlled, betraying not an emotion, not a fear—only a cheerful smile

[2] On the death of Mr. Strong, Mr. Dyer became the junior partner of Henry T. Fuller who had himself been junior partner in the firm of Strong and Fuller.—Author.

of derision. Then he arose to reply, as confident as if he were presenting an ex parte motion, and before he finished Carpenter had not a leg to stand on.

"A natural logician, Mr. Strong stated his propositions in such manner that you had to beware lest they should lead you captive, although your relation to the case made it necessary to controvert them. There was no noise in his utterances—no oratory—not the slightest demonstration for effect. He carried one along by processes of pure reasoning. Yet on suitable occasion he was eloquent. He was somewhat like Wendell Phillips, who held his audiences spellbound, yet never made a gesture. His arguments were in the nature of quiet conversations with the court—sometimes refined and perhaps fallacious, generally invincible. Intellect reigned supreme, and he was as pure a man as ever looked upon the sunlight. When Timothy O. Howe, of the marble face, lay in his last sleep, Robert Collyer bending over him at the funeral exercises in Kenosha, taking no Bible text, waved his hand over the bier and said, 'This is clean dust.' So was Marshall M. Strong 'clean dust,' living or dead.

"I can think of no higher tribute to character than that paid to Mr. Strong, long after his death, by the Supreme Court, in delivering its judgment in the case of Cornell vs. Barnes, reported in 26th Wisconsin. It was a suit for collection of a debt by foreclosure of mortgage security, and involved a considerable amount. The defense was usury, and if there was a usurious contract, it was made by Mr. Strong as the attorney of the mortgagee. In fact he had made the loan for his client and represented him in every stage of the transaction. The usury alleged connected itself with the breach of a secondary contract by Mr. Strong, if there was any breach, and this was the vital point. The lips of Mr. Strong were sealed in death, and our evidence to repel the charge was largely circumstantial. Said the

Supreme Court, in its opinion written by Justice Byron Paine: 'The high character of Mr. Strong, who was well known to the people of this state and to the members of this court, seems also to speak for him when he is unable to speak for himself and repels the assertion that he would thus violate a plain agreement, as unfounded and improbable.' "

Mr. Charles H. Lee, a bright Racine lawyer and something of a scholar and litterateur himself, who as a young man was a student in the office of Fuller and Dyer, knew Mr. Strong quite well during the years just preceding his death. He also became very familiar with Mr. Fuller's estimate of the man who for many years was his senior partner. Mr. Lee, a few years ago, wrote for me a brief appreciation of Mr. Strong, in which he said: "He had an exceedingly high conception of the duties and dignity of his chosen profession, was liberal and kindly to his juniors at the bar, and always ready to counsel and assist them. He disliked noise or bombast, and while no one in his day was more successful with juries, his arguments were always addressed to their reason, their common sense, their spirit of fairness, never to their passions or their prejudices."

Mr. Lee told me also that Mr. Strong was a friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who always stopped at Racine to visit him when he came West. At the dedication of the memorial tablet erected in the high school for its alumni who lost their lives in the War of the Rebellion, Mr. Emerson made an address. He lectured here also at another time at Titus Hall. Charles E. Dyer has written of his pleasure in meeting Mr. Emerson for a half-hour after this lecture, on invitation of Mr. Strong, of whom he wrote: "On another occasion he had Wendell Phillips as a guest; thus he was a patron of literature and a friend of humanity, as well as an expounder of the law. He was a man of fine literary tastes and accomplishments. During the Rebellion he wrote

letters to Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Stanton on the conduct of the war. When John Brown was hanged he called a meeting on his own responsibility at the old court-house, and made a speech in defense and eulogy of the old hero."

Mr. Strong's literary tastes led him naturally into newspaper work in the earlier years of his life in Racine, and he made two side ventures into that attractive field, though he never took it up as a vocation, or let it interfere seriously with his professional work as a lawyer. On February 14, 1838, the first number of the first newspaper in Racine County appeared, with the name of N. Delavan Wood as editor and the following as proprietors: Marshall M. Strong, Gilbert Knapp, John M. Myers, Lorenzo Janes, Stephen N. Ives, and Alfred Cary. The *Argus* was a four-page weekly. The second number contained an editorial announcement that N. Delavan Wood was no longer connected with the paper, though carefully omitting details. The fact was that the former editor had absconded with all of the portable assets, and had been followed to Chicago by Marshall M. Strong, who recovered a portion of the loot. It is likely that it was on the *Argus* that Mr. Strong had his first experience as an editor, for the paper had but eight months of life, its last issue being dated October 6, 1838, and only the proprietors' names appeared at the head of the paper after the first issue.

The Racine *Advocate* was founded in 1842, with Thomas J. Wisner as editor. Mr. Wisner died August 12, 1843, and Mr. Strong became editor; he continued to direct its affairs until December, 1844. Charles E. Dyer, in 1879, said of the paper, "No better newspaper has ever been published in the county than the *Advocate* under the editorial charge of Marshall M. Strong." Mr. Strong's hatred of the shams and deceits practised by many for purposes of profit and preferment in business and politics is clearly revealed by the policy he adopted in excluding from the columns of the

Advocate the quack medicine advertisements which were so prominent a feature of the newspapers of that day, and so remunerative a source of income for them. It brings into sharp relief, also, the fundamental idealism that actuated him, which a half-century or more later found national expression in the very real pure-food laws of the land.

In January, 1846 the territorial legislature passed an act providing for submission to the people of the Territory at a special election, (1) the question of a change from territorial to state government; (2) providing for a census of the inhabitants of the territory; and (3) for electing delegates to a constitutional convention to be assembled at Madison the first Monday in October, 1846. The consideration of these propositions occupied almost the whole month of January, and Mr. Strong, who was a member of the upper house, took a prominent part in the debates. One proposal, in the discussion of which there were many sharp exchanges, was that negroes be permitted to vote for convention delegates, which was favored by Marshall M. Strong, and violently opposed by Moses M. Strong of Iowa County. The latter stated that at a recent election in his county, for delegate to Congress, the abolition candidate did not get a single vote, and he thought it poor policy "to give the South any reason to suspect that Wisconsin was favorably disposed toward the abolition movement"—which is an interesting side-light on abolition sentiment—or the want of it—in Wisconsin in 1846.

Marshall M. Strong, in reply, championed the cause of the negro in spirited argument, but to no effect. The legislature was strongly Democratic and anti-abolition, and the outcome of the matter was that negroes were not permitted to vote for delegates to the constitutional convention. Comparatively few northern Democrats, then or later, were outspoken in favor of the abolition of slavery, and Marshall M. Strong found in his own party little sup-

port of his legislative efforts to secure for the free negro in Wisconsin recognition of his civil and political rights as a man and a citizen.

The convention met and organized on October 5, 1846, with Marshall M. Strong and Edward G. Ryan as two of the fourteen delegates from Racine County, which at the time had the largest population of any in the state. When the question of negro suffrage came up in the convention, E. G. Ryan of Racine and Moses M. Strong of Iowa County made violent speeches in opposition to it, and Marshall M. Strong, who in the legislature ten months before had championed it, declared that he "had changed his views on the subject and would vote against it," and that was about all that he had to say on the subject in the convention. When the matter came to a vote there, but thirteen were for it in a total of 124, and the people of the Territory confirmed this action by a vote of nearly two to one when the question of negro suffrage was submitted to them on April 6, 1847.

The convention was in the control of the progressive wing of the democracy, and Mr. Strong, being a conservative Democrat, found himself in opposition to the majority on the three great issues before the body, which were finally settled after extended and spirited debate, and the convention declared itself, (1) against all banks of issue; (2) for an elective judiciary; and (3) for full property rights for married women.

In the debates on these proposals there was intense and continual antagonism between Mr. Strong, on the one hand, who opposed them, and his colleague Ryan and his namesake for Iowa County, on the other, who favored them. So indignant was the first, and so sure of his ground, that when the convention finally adopted them he resigned his seat and went home to organize a campaign to defeat the constitution when it should be submitted to

the people for ratification, a project in which he was entirely successful, for on April 6, 1847, it was rejected by a vote of 20,233 to 14,119.

Mr. Strong declined membership in the second constitutional convention, made necessary by the rejection of the work of the first. The constitution which it formulated, and which was ratified in 1848, is still in force, the oldest constitution of any state west of the Allegheny Mountains. Mr. Strong was elected to the first state legislature in 1849, and took a prominent part in the revision of the statutes of the state, after which he retired permanently from the political strife so necessarily connected with public life, which was uncongenial to his thoughtful, quiet, and domestic nature.

Three recent publications of the State Historical Society —viz., *The Movement for Statehood 1845–1846*, *The Convention of 1846*, and *The Struggle over Ratification 1846–1847*, Constitutional Series, edited by Milo M. Quaife—have made it possible to get intimate and accurate estimates of some of the "Fathers" of Wisconsin, that have previously been difficult to secure. They are just the books for any who may wish to make an exhaustive study of those movements and men. They furnish a wealth of material, also, in the contemporary opinions of associates in the legislature and the conventions, and of newspaper editors and correspondents whose impressions and judgments were given frank and free expression. I think it worth while to make two or three quotations from these volumes which throw into bold relief the essential attributes of character that made Marshall M. Strong the real leader that he was.

On the organization of the convention Mr. Strong was a candidate for its presidency, and received the second largest number of votes on the first three ballots. As to his fitness for that office we have the opinion of E. G. Ryan, his colleague from Racine County, who in convention

business had seldom been in agreement with him. Mr. Ryan contributed a series of articles to the Racine *Advocate* during the convention, under the pseudonym "Lobby," and in commenting on the resignation of Mr. Strong directly after that event, he said, among other things: "His resignation is deeply lamented by all with whom he has been in the habit of acting, and his presence in the hall is greatly missed by all. His whole course in the convention was marked by great ability; he was ever a ready, fluent, and practical debater; very courteous in his bearing to all, and frequently, when assailed, giving proofs by his calmness and self-possession, of eminent fitness as well in temper as in ability for his position. His circumstances would undoubtedly have rendered the presidency of the convention a more desirable position to him; his occasional presence in the chair fully warranted his claims upon it; and neither I nor many others here have now any doubt that had the usages of the party been observed, and a caucus nomination made that nomination would have fallen upon him. The result was a far greater loss to the public than to him. Without any injustice to the present presiding officer, I feel well warranted in saying that, if Mr. Strong had been chosen the president, the convention would have adjourned weeks ago with a better constitution than they have now adopted." When in the midst of controversy a man steps aside to praise his adversary, he may be given credit for candor.

In the campaign for ratification of the constitution of 1846 Marshall M. Strong was generally recognized as leader of the opposition. He addressed a big rally of the antis at the Milwaukee courthouse on March 6, 1847, which was reported for the Madison *Wisconsin Argus* by its correspondent "John Barleycorn"; he said that when introduced to the meeting, Mr. Strong was "greeted with overwhelming cheers for several minutes. He spoke about half an hour

in his usual calm, clear, and convincing manner. The style of his oratory is peculiar. Though there is nothing striking about it, yet no man can listen to him without feeling his soul strangely and powerfully stirred up—without feeling that a large and noble soul is communing with his soul at unwonted depths. How strange it seems, and yet how welcome in these days of shallow quackery and raving demagogism to listen to a true man! . . . All that I have seen of Strong has conspired to give me an exalted opinion of the man." This writer gave expression to the feeling of many who listened to Mr. Strong. His positions—and his arguments in support of them—were not always unassailable, though taken and maintained with such evident sincerity and great earnestness as to convince the open-minded and compel the respect of all. The Milwaukee *Sentinel and Gazette*, in reporting the above meeting, said that "Marshall M. Strong followed Mr. Kilbourn, and for five minutes after his name was announced and he appeared upon the stand, cheer upon cheer shook the building and woke up responsive echoes from without. Most cordial indeed was the reception extended to Mr. Strong, and so he evidently felt it to be, for it stirred his blood as the trumpet call rouses up the warrior, and he spoke with a power and eloquence which told with wonderful effect upon his audience."

Although Mr. Strong had the tastes and spirit of an aristocrat, there was no snobbery in him. He was a straight, a clear, and a clean thinker, with a fine scorn of anybody or anything that was crooked, or dubious, or unclean. It was an aristocracy of brains, and heart, and soul that claimed him, and to which he owned allegiance. In the social and civic organization and activities of the settlement, the village, and the city that was his home, he took the part of a man and a citizen. He kept store, as we have seen; he was a member of fire company, engine number one, at a time when the most effective fire-fighting apparatus known was

a hand-pump machine, and it was hard and often dangerous work when called out by an alarm; and in every other possible way identified himself with the work, responsibilities, and other common interests of the community.

The last ten or more years of Mr. Strong's life were devoted quite exclusively to the practise of his profession, in which he was preëminently successful. He was the recognized head of the bar of the first district, and had a large clientele. I have talked recently with a gentleman who, when a young man, knew Mr. Strong and heard him argue cases in court. He told me that it was Mr. Strong's settled policy never to take a case unless convinced that justice was with his client.

The special attention of the reader is invited to the portrait of Mr. Strong accompanying this sketch. It does not require an expert physiognomist to see delineated there the fine traits of character ascribed to him by those who knew him well and appraised him truly. Of Mr. Strong's religious faith or experience I have learned but little, except that he had no church relationship, though his second wife and all of her family—the Ullmanns—were members of the Episcopal Church. Mr. Strong died March 9, 1864, and is buried beside his first wife and four of his children, in the family lot in Mound Cemetery, Racine.

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